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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-seventh year

Identical letters dated 12 November 2012 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Tensions are rising and the situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, is being markedly destabilized by Israeli acts of aggression against the Palestinian civilian population. In grave breach of international humanitarian law, Israel, the occupying Power, continues to deliberately launch military attacks against civilian areas, causing loss of life, injury and destruction of civilian homes and properties. The international community, especially the Security Council, cannot remain silent or complacent as Israel continues to wreak death, destruction and terror on the Palestinian people under its military occupation.

The recent period has witnessed the continuation of Israeli air strikes and bombardment, with the occupying forces launching missiles, artillery shells and gunfire at civilian areas in the northern, central and southern parts of the besieged Gaza Strip. The latest escalation began on Thursday, 8 November 2012, when Israeli occupying forces fired at a civilian area in the Abassan village, east of Khan Younis in southern Gaza, striking a Palestinian child, who was playing football with his friends in front of his family home. The young boy, Ahmed Younis Khader Abu Daqqa, age 13, suffered a bullet wound in the abdomen and died minutes later.

Israel's military strikes continued into Saturday, 10 November, and Sunday, 11 November, killing six more Palestinians and injuring more than 40 other civilians, including women and children. On Saturday, Israeli artillery bombardments targeted a football playground at Al-Mentar Hill in Al-Shuja'iya neighbourhood, east of Gaza City, killing two children, Mohammed Usama Hassan Harara, age 16, and Ahmed Mustafa Khaled Harara, age 17, and also killing Ahmed Kamel Al-Derdsawi, age 18, and Matar Imad Abdul Rahman Abu Al-Ata, age 19. On Sunday, Israeli warplanes launching strikes against the Jabaliya area of northern Gaza, killed Mohammed Fuad Obeid, age 20, and Mohammed Said Shkoukani,

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age 28. These lethal Israeli attacks also caused destruction to Palestinian civilian properties, including a poultry farm, brick factory, plastics factory and metal workshop, further decimating industry and livelihoods in the besieged Gaza Strip.

The escalation in Israel's aggression against the Palestinian people also included the intensification of its illegal colonization campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Last week, the Israeli Government submitted tenders for the construction of another 1,285 settlement units, with the bulk of this unlawful activity centred on Occupied East Jerusalem, where Israeli measures to alter the demographic composition and Palestinian-Arab, Muslim and Christian character and identity of the City is most fierce. The plans in this regard entail the construction of another 607 units in the illegal "Pisgat Zeev" settlement and 606 units in the illegal "Ramot" settlement in Occupied East Jerusalem, as well as another 72 units in the illegal "Ariel" settlement, the fourth largest Israeli settlement in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, built deep in the West Bank near Nablus, 17 km east of the 1967 border. Such plans are yet further proof of Israel's rejection of the two-State solution and its active efforts to render that solution totally meaningless and untenable on the ground.

Further, the Israeli Defense Minister today declared the "authorization" of another 538 settlement units in the illegal settlement of "Itamar". This is just the latest in a series of such reckless, provocative announcements regarding illegal settlement activities routinely made by Israeli officials, from the Prime Minister and downwards. Indeed, just today, reports were published quoting Israel's Finance Minister as stating: "During the current Government's term, we doubled the budgets [allocated] to 'Judea and Samaria'. We did it with a low profile, in agreement with the mayors." Clearly, Israel isn't shy about touting its systematic war crimes (see Rome Statute, article 8 (2) (b) (viii)) against the Palestinian people, especially the obsession with building illegal settlements.

It is also clear that the Israeli Government continues to allow the lawlessness of the hundreds of thousands of settlers it has illegally transferred to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention, obviously fostering their ill-behaviour with its vulgar intransigence and impunity. In recent days, Israeli settlers continued their reign of terror, causing destruction to Palestinian property and trauma to Palestinian families. This included the uprooting of yet another 100 olive trees in the village of Al-Sawya, south of the city of Nablus, and the spraying of racist graffiti, such as "Death to Arabs" and "Price Tag" on homes in the area. It has also included an attempt by Israeli settlers to burn down a Palestinian home in Bethlehem, where in the dead of night, at 2.30 a.m., a gang of settler terrorists sprayed graffiti and poured gasoline on the house and were only prevented from committing this crime by Palestinian residents in the neighbourhood who forcibly stopped them from lighting the house on fire.

All of these deliberate violations by Israel of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, are indicative of the path that it has chosen to follow: one of aggression, colonization and destruction, rather than one of peace, stability and coexistence. The situation is clear and it is one that requires the international community to take a stand for peace, for international law, and for the protection and rights of the Palestinian civilian population that is so gravely suffering under Israel's more than 45-year military occupation. The international

community, including the Security Council, cannot continue to fail to act to hold Israel accountable for its flagrant breaches of the law. Continued failure will only further embolden the occupying Power, bolstering its impunity and hastening its destruction of the two-State solution for peace.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 437 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 1 November 2012 (A/ES-10/565-S/2012/798) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations